



NEWS RELEASE

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Border Patrol Agent Rescues Man From Throngs of Dense Vegetation in Rio Grande River Then is Rescued Himself

One Other Person is Believed to Have Drowned

BROWNSVILLE, Texas – A Border Patrol Agent assigned to the Brownsville Station rescues an unknown man from the dense overgrowth of vegetation that is becoming more and more abundant in the Rio Grande River. The agent attempted to rescue a second individual from the river and had become exhausted. The agent was unable to reach the second individual and had to be rescued from the river by fellow Border Patrol Agents.

At approximately 9:00 p.m., Monday evening, a Border Patrol Agent requested assistance via his Service radio in extracting an unknown number of individuals from the Rio Grande River. The agent noticed the individuals when they began to frantically yell and splash in the dark of the night. Upon hearing the agent's request, Border Patrol Communications immediately notified EMS and the Brownsville Fire Department to respond to the incident. Upon arriving at the riverbank, the agent noticed a group of people on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande and yelled to them for assistance. There was no response to his request. The agent jumped into the murky waters of the Rio Grande, after another agent arrived to assist. The light of his partner's flashlight and his determination were all the agent had to aid him in locating the persons in distress.

The agent rescued an unidentified man from the river and returned to the murky waters in an attempt to rescue another individual. During this attempt the agent edged towards the second individual in distress, but the individual went under. Still being aided by the light of a handheld flashlight, the agent attempted to reach the individual, only to become entangled in the dense aquatic vegetation. It is not known whether or not the second individual made it safely or not. The agent, exhausted and unable to untangle himself, requested assistance from his partner on the riverbank. His partner quickly scanned the area and found an empty milk jug, now a makeshift flotation device, and tossed it to the agent to keep him afloat.

Within a matter of minutes of the call for assistance, several more Border Patrol Agents arrived at the scene to assist. A "rescue disc", a Frisbee like flotation device with a nylon rope, was obtained and the agent who threw the plastic milk jug stripped off his uniform and entered the treacherous waters of the Rio Grande River to assist his exhausted partner only to become entangled in the dense vegetation.

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One of the arriving agents entered the water and was able to pull the exhausted agent to the river's edge with the assistance of other agents that arrived at the scene with a rescue rope. Subsequently, agents retrieved the second agent from the water. Many agents of the McAllen Border Patrol Sector have received training in Water Safety and receive training in drown proofing techniques at the academy. Agents are not certified lifeguards, and the decision to enter the water in an attempt to rescue a person is a personal decision based on their experience and known strengths.

The unidentified man rescued from the river and the agent that rescued him were transported to local area hospitals. Another agent, who arrived to assist, was also taken to a hospital after injuring her leg on the riverbank. Other agents were treated at the scene for exhaustion, but refused further treatment.

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